



Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Workforce Committee,

The Fair Shot Coalition that Causa is a member of and Oregonians across the state worked hard during the 2015 session to pass a strong and inclusive paid sick time law for Oregon workers. This law is meant to ensure that workers are able to take paid time off when they or a family member are ill. This as an important public health measure and as a basic right that all workers should be entitled to. All too often workers were going to work sick because they couldn't afford to take the time off or they feared retaliation – even losing their job - if they missed even one day of work because of illness. We are proud of this new law, which took effect on January 1, 2016 and has only just started to benefit the hundreds of thousands of workers in our state who waited far too long for this basic right.

SB 1594 represents a substantive policy change and an unnecessary roll back to Oregon's historic paid sick time law that hurts workers and takes money out of their pockets. **We are opposed to any changes to the new sick time law that roll back protections for workers. We are opposed to SB 1594 because it rolls back paid sick time and forces employees on public works projects to pay for the cost of their own sick time.**

SB 1594 has the net effect of allowing employers to deduct from an employee's total compensation package the value of paid sick time. This means in essence that employees will be paying for the cost of their own sick time. This is contrary to the very intent of PAID sick time. Indeed, what will the many workers who have already started accruing this time do if this right is repealed? Will they have to pay back their employer for any sick time used before this new law would go into effect? What message does this send to hard working Oregonians and the families who rely on them?

Paid sick time should be exactly that. Paid time off for when an employee or their family member is sick. This bill allows an employer to deduct the value of sick time from an employee's overall compensation package on public works projects. SB 1594 would take away a right that workers on public works projects have already obtained (as of January 1, 2016) and goes against the legislative intent of the sick time law. Protecting all workers, their families, coworkers and consumers from spreading illness and disease or losing out on much needed pay is something that this legislature sought to remedy when passing sick time last year.

In addition, many construction workers change employers frequently as work demands necessitate. For these workers, they could be penalized several times over the course of a year and have sick time deducted by multiple different employers even if they never get to use that sick time. In this instance, how do we ensure that workers actually get protected sick time when they need it? How do we ensure that workers are not double penalized in this way if they switch employers?

Public money should not be spent to undercut workers rights or undermine benefits that are required by law. We should do whatever we can to ensure that public money spent on public works projects also benefits our greater economy by protecting workers rights under the law.

Thank you for your consideration

Andrea Miller, Causa Executive Director